

Blaxhall

Village Newsletter



Autumn 2022

Keep Calm and ...



... remember it's Blaxhall! There are those who might say things aren't going entirely well at the moment, with floods as bad as any time in recent years, and a church tower with a survey that on the face of it would dissuade anyone from standing anywhere within 100ft of it, but then we remember this is Blaxhall and such challenges are nothing new. The tower has shuffled around a bit, lost a few tie rods and gained a few cracks, but that's nothing to past adventures, as evidenced by the huge brick repair, believed to date to the late 17th century. See page 2 for the latest news on the campaign to keep her standing. Flooding is another old bugbear, with no miracle solutions in sight, but again efforts are ongoing to at least keep it in check. More on that inside, together with news of the Christmas Party, Carol Service and the latest from The Ship.



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Restoration Project Update

It has been an eventful few months on the tower restoration project. The good news is that the 2 day detailed survey (conducted by the architect and 2 specialised sub- contractors) is now complete. This was indeed comprehensive and involved the use of a "cherry picker" to look inside the structure of the tower at high level, particularly around the exit points of the steel reinforcing rods. Readers will recall that it was the corrosion and subsequent expansion of these rods that is the primary cause of the tower's current structural problems. Both the original design and subsequent reinforcement of the tower has had the aim of providing a robust bell hanging frame with the structure around it to resist the considerable forces resulting from the harmonic motion of the bells when rung. Initial results of the latest survey are interesting, revealing, for example, that the vertical column of the spiral staircase is as much as 7 inches out of true as it makes its vertical ascent into the tower.



The next work package from the architect is to produce a design scheme for the repair of the tower, which will be signed off by the Parochial Church Council and the Church of England. Once this is signed off, the architect will invite tenders for the work from suitably experienced and qualified suppliers and we will then have a definitive project budget (subject only to claims for unforeseen condition aspects or client delay etc).

In parallel with this technical activity we have made progress in the fundraising area. Currently the Church has an application with the National Heritage Lottery Fund. This is based on a provisional scheme cost of £200,000 and this cost would be covered (if the application is successful) by £170,000 of Lottery Funding and £30,000 of local fundraising. Readers will appreciate that it is not just enough to have a beautiful, iconic centre of worship like our Church, in order to qualify for funding we have to commit to a considerable range of engagement with the local community so that our church becomes a community asset and benefits the community. Consequently the funding application commits us to considerable and worthwhile outreach with local schools (all age ranges) so that the restoration of the church becomes a learning resource linked to the National Curriculum. So this would involve pupil visits to the church and volunteer visits to the schools. Furthermore we would build links with local youth clubs so that young people who might be NEET (not in education, employment or training) or indeed young people who are in education could build self confidence and/ or employment skills by working with us on the Tower Project. *(continued on P6, towards bottom of page)*





Roads

At last the road to Snape has been re opened. The County Council has repaired the road and also ironed out the previous dip so that the road is not quite as undulating as it was. At the time of writing though the badgers may have returned and more work is being carried out, but let us hope it does not bring about a further road closure.

Now the rainy season is upon us we have the perennial problem of flooding. The Parish Council is constantly in touch with the county council to clear drains and ditches but very little is done by them. We also liaise with farmers to ask them to keep their ditches clear and plough furrows to lessen the run off from fields, all of which helps but unfortunately with higher than average monthly rainfall we struggle to prevent flooding occurring in the usual places.

We are very lucky to have D E Keebles in the village who are clearing one of the problem areas and also do a tremendous amount of hedge trimming and other roadside works for the village for which I am sure we are all very grateful.

Thank you very much Keebles!

Village Hall

We continue to do maintenance at the village hall and playing field, including trimming shrubs and vegetation round the hall and we will be having a work party to tidy up a bit more after Christmas.

We have had our electrics inspected and have had to have some remedial work done but we now have our electrical installation certificate, so we are now up to date with all our safety requirements.

Christmas is almost upon us and to get everyone into the mood we have the village party in the hall at 7.30 on the 10th December. The party was fantastically revived last year after Covid and this year we hope to make it even better. We have the ever popular John & Dave to entertain us, with music from the 60's through to modern day. They will keep everyone dancing all night. We put on a splendid buffet including turkey, ham, salads, quiches and vegetarian food. The bar is well stocked with various wines and beers, including real ale straight from the barrel, spirits, cider and soft drinks are also available, all at very reasonable prices.

So come and join us for a friendly, enjoyable evening, please note that entrance is by prepayment only. £15 a head to me or Joy, please help us by ordering early.

Graham 688192 or Joy 688309.

BLAXHALL XMAS PARTY
10TH OF DECEMBER
7.30PM TILL LATE
IN THE VILLAGE HALL
Live music from
John and dave
Licensed bar and
wonderful food
Tickets £15,
available from;
Graham 01728 688192
or Joy 01728 688309

The Ship



First of all we would like to thank all who helped to keep the old Ship afloat though the many difficulties of the last twelve months:-

Many thanks to you all and may you all have a Very Merry Festive Season and a Happy New Year.

To anyone who knows the village pub, the words 'Blaxhall Ship' mean more than just a "a pub in Blaxhall".

The two simple rooms with uneven floors, low ceilings and a collection of furniture from the sale yard, might have a charm or, a lack of pretence or maybe, an air of informality that encourages the tradition of freedom in good fellowship that is the very Spirit of the Ship. Whatever it is it's in your hands and I am doing my best to help.

Certainly; the three hundred years of history as a venue for music, singing and 'stories' is 'in the stones' and will continue every Monday and many other days each week and culminating in a 'New Year's Eve Party' with the very talented and popular John and Lyn Ward duo.

As usual, New Year's Day will have Live Music from 2.30pm from one of our most popular and versatile performers 'Johnny G'.

The changes this autumn season have included the arrival of Martin Fuller as general manager and Ricky Jeffs as assistant Chef and assistant to Martin in the bar. Ricky supports Liverpool F/C so best not mention it.

Martin is supported by his charming partner Ella who has vast experience of administration of large International hotel chains. But I sure you will agree, the Ship represents a challenge all of its own!

About Village pub's: They are all looking for a marketing angle, some difference maybe, and most claim to have the best range of real ale kept wonderfully fresh and food that is "the best for miles around".

The Ship says: "Still the Same", yes, still the same good country cooking at a moderate price and always a good Cask Ale that is cheaper than anywhere else.

Indeed, the response of our new Manager to these hard times, is to reduce our food prices (£10 Sunday Roast) in addition to providing alternatives at a mere £5.

See you there I hope,

Terry Davey

Harvest time is a few months back now, getting earlier in the year as it has in recent times, it's increasingly a subject for the summer newsletter rather the autumn one, but I'm going to plough on (see what I did there?) and raise it regardless, as I quite wanted to share some material I was reading recently, especially given the watery theme running through this edition (see what I did again?!)

Dating back to the mid-late 19th century, we have several entries from the records of farmer George Rope, of Grove Farm. Labourers were usually hired by the day or week, but harvest work was treated separately and done by contract. This extract from George's account book shows the allowances of 'food' to the harvesters.

Harvest 1860

Agreed July 21st, 1860, with 6 men, viz. Joe Levett, Jas. Hammond, Joe Row, Ben. Keeble, Jas. Leggett & Robt. French for the Harvest as hereafter named. There then follows a list of all the fields to be harvested, with their sizes and crop type, followed by the agreed allowances;

1 st. mutton instead of dinners.

½ pt. best beer in the morning and

1 pint in the afternoon when after the corn.

The guarantee of beer before and after work is something unlikely to appear in many contracts today, but farmer Rope was aware of the potential for carrying on in the evening and suffering for it in the morning, as shown by an entry for the harvest contract a few years later;

It is hereby farther agreed that should any man lose any time through drinking he shall forfeit to the company 5/- pr. day for every day he thus offends. And should he lose any time through sickness he is to forfeit 2/- pr. day to the company and 5/- pr. day to the master.

Hangovers weren't the only problem facing the Blaxhall farmer at harvest time in those days. In mid August 1860 George began an entry with "*The wettest and coldest summer to this time I ever remember*" and there followed a long list of woes. But worse was to come in 1879;

Aug. 23. Began cutting tolavera - slightly sprouted as it stood - from continual rains for the last fortnight. The wettest season since 1860 and similar, but not so cold - about two thirds of the hay & clover spoiled - and a large quantity carried away by floods - on the 22nd July we had the greatest flood I ever remember here. I had cut no grass - but after the flood we had about 8 days fine warm weather and I cut & secured my hay without any rain. The Leiston marshes all flooded and are likely to be till after harvest so that they will get no hay and are obliged to get stock out. Mr. J. Toller took 41 - at the Park (Glemham) & 20 at Sudbourne. At Framlingham boats & carts were used to take passengers to & from station. Street s & shops at Halesworth flooded and hay, where cut, carried away by the stream - after this we had a few fine days and then it came on wet with an occasional fine day till the 17th Sep. when in the evening about 9 a thunder storm came gradually on which was very severe. About 1 o'clock a cow was killed in the Dunningworth Hall meadows below John Hammonds - another cow was killed at Mr. Chaplin's, Sudbourne. At Ipswich it was said to be even more severe - and great floods followed - and here the flood was nearly as high as on the 22nd July - but at Leiston they had very little rain. Sept. 24 Leiston marshes again flooded. Archer had given orders for some of his bullocks to come home on Monday but the rain came down in torrents on the 23rd & 24th Sept. and caused another great flood, so that he is completely flooded again. Langham is not safe to pass - the water runs over Mr. Smith's wall, all the length of it - and foot planks are not visible. Arthur, Jessie, Ellen, Edith & Edwd. gone to Shrewsbury - Henry's wedding - they report a delluge of rain all the way down - but the 25th was a splendid bright sun shining day for the bride - 26th & 27th also fine. A great deal of corn has been carted in bad condition - many stacks have been taken down because of heating - and very many wheat stacks.

Note. The 'heating' referred to is the propensity of haystacks, in certain conditions, to create so much heat from fermentation as to cause spontaneous combustion.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust

It's been a busy few months for the Trust. We've now fully taken over management of Stone Common, and with it the management of the allotments and grazing land. New licences for both have been issued. Bracken has been cleared from the land to the south of Prevost's Path (the footpath running through the site, named after the donor of the land), as part of our plan to return this area to managed acid grassland. At our other piece of land, Jasper's Pightle, we're about to undertake hedge laying on the B1069 Snape-Tunstall road boundary, thanks to support (and volunteers) from Coasts and Heaths AONB.

Two dates for your diary: We will be hedge planting at Stone Common on Tuesday 27 December and Monday 2 January (2 pm on both days). A perfect opportunity to work off any festive over-indulgence! (however, it won't be all work and no fun – we hope to lay on mince pies and mulled wine too, with many thanks to Trudy Simmons). Bring appetite, stout shoes, gloves and a spade!



Minutes of meetings and dates for future meetings of the Trust are on our website, www.blaxhallcommons.com. You are welcome to attend, but since these are usually held in the home of one of the trustees, please let us know in advance, so we can ensure that there's room for all: email the Hon Secretary Eve Rossor at everossor@gmail.com.

We're always on the lookout for extra help and volunteers; if you think you might be able to help the Trust in any way, please get in touch with Eve. In the meantime, we wish all our friends and supporters a Merry Christmas, and look forward to working with you to preserve and enhance our wonderful commons and open spaces in 2023.

Continued from page 2

In order to strengthen our outreach into the community, we will need a new web site. This will be a website that all volunteers can update in real time (such as "Squarezone" offer). Thus, if we have a tower/ educational event at the church we can promote it quickly with a wide coverage. Miranda and I will set this up in the near future.

The Church's excellent record in wildlife diversity continues and, at a suggestion from Joy (thank you Joy) the repair of the louvres in the tower will be combined with the installation of swift nesting boxes.

If you would like to be involved in the community/ educational outreach aspects of the project, please do drop Miranda or me a line:-

vincent@vfhuntltd.onmicrosoft.com

If you would like to donate or support fundraising, please contact Miranda:-
miranda@thesummerhouseinsnape.co.uk
or Shane:- shane@blaxhall.com



Blaxhall Carol Service

on
December 18th
at **6.00pm**
in

St. Peter's Church



Church Road Safari Lunch

If you were walking down Church Road, and spotted fourteen people roaming from house to house, clutching bottles, plates, knives and forks.....it was the Church Road Safari Lunch.

We had starters and Bubbly at Vine Cottage, then on to No 3, for main course.....a bit later than anticipated!!!! After that at 5.30 ish!!!! Ive lost track! We all wandered down to 1 Tudor Cott's,



where we squeezed in, much to everyone's amazement! There was a magnificent Pavlova we all drooled over, a huge cheese board, coffee and chocs.....the wine kept flowing, dogs joined in for the day too. In all a lovely community get together.

Talk to your neighbours and do one, it's great fun!

Flooding

Graham has already touched upon the latest flooding issues on the PC page, and there's ultimately not a great deal more to say. To cheer us up a little though, I've dug out the old favourite pic of people boating on Beversham bridge,



from back in the early 1900s. Looking at the elevation on Google Earth, there must have been huge areas of grazing meadows under water,

together with Langham bridge, while Gorse Farm and Grove Farm would, quite literally, have been treading water.



Getting back to today, there is little to be done about regular flooding spots like Station Road, other than continually clearing out the ditches, which relentlessly fill with silt from field run-off, but the one thing we can all do is write to Suffolk County Council, with a view to refreshing the ditches in the short term and perhaps even considering more permanent solutions should finances ever allow. Letters from seriously inconvenienced and unhappy residents can only serve to back-up the PC's ongoing requests for intervention.

Blaxhall Play Readings get off to a flying start!

Several people turned up to the first of our Play Readings, and it was a huge success! We read *An Inspector Calls*, and even though most of us had seen it before, we all experienced a tingle up our spines at the end!!!

This was followed in November by *The Importance of being Earnest* - another really good evening.



Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 858215	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 688003	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)		

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Ray Herring 07885 249218
ray.herring@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk
 Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2022 dates are: **Wednesday 12th January, Wednesday 2nd March, Wednesday 4th May, Wednesday 6th July, Wednesday 7th September** and **Wednesday 2nd November**.

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri. You can book a pick-up with “Katch” bus service by using the app, or by phoning **01728 554455**.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org
 For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: the upcoming dates are, **21 September, 19 October, 16 November, 14 December**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge. Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
 To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 688205

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916,
Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Tree Warden - Joy Shaw, joyjoyshaw@gmail.com, 01728 688309

Deadline for next Newsletter - 12th February